

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 IO-10 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /074 W
----- 070912

R 021135Z APR 75

FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3380

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT AO

SUBJECT: FNLA REPLIES TO ATROCITY STORIES IN WORLD PRESS

1. JOHNNY EDUARDO, FNLA'S MEMBER OF THE PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL, CALLED IN THE CONSULAR CORPS TO EXPLAIN THE EVENTS OF THE PAST WEEK FROM FNLA'S VIEWPOINT.

2. EDUARDO'S PITCH WAS THAT FNLA HAD BEEN A LAW-ABIDING CITIZEN SINCE ITS ARRIVAL IN LUANDA LAST OCTOBER. FNLA HAD PIOUSLY TURNED THE OTHER CHEEK TO REPEATED KILLINGS AND PROVOCATIONS BY MPLA, NEVER RESORTING TO THE USE OF FORCE BECAUSE THEY DESIRED TO ADHERE TO THE ALVOR AGREEMENT AND MOMBASA ACCORD. ON MARCH 22 MPLA AMBUSHED A FNLA SOLDIER THEN SHOT AT FNLA'S LOCAL MILITARY COMMANDER WHEN HE WENT TO A MPLA BASE TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION. FNLA, HE SAID, IS ONLY HUMAN AND COULDN'T BE PUSHED ANY FURTHER, AND IT REACTED TO MPLA'S PROVOCATION. EDUARDO LAID PARTICULAR BLAME ON MPLA'S ARMING OF CIVILIANS, INCLUDING VERY YOUNG BOYS, AND THE ENTIRE PROBLEM OF "POWER TO THE PEOPLE." HE SAID THE ONLY REASON FNLA COULD SEE FOR THESE ACTS BY MPLA WAS TO PREPARE THE PEOPLE TO FIGHT FNLA.

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3. SEVERAL TIMES IN THE 35 MINUTE DISCOURSE HE RETURNED TO THE ALLEGATIONS OF ATROCITIES OR MASSACRES PURPORTEDLY DONE BY FNLA. HE SAID ALL OF THESE STORIES WERE COMPLETE LIES. CIVILIANS ARE SOMETIMES THE UNFORTUNATE VICTIMS OF WAR BUT IN THIS CASE, IT IS THE FAULT OF MPLA FOR ARMING CIVILIANS. HE SAID THE PORTUGUESE NEWSMEN WHO DISSEMINATED THESE FALSE RUMORS SHOULD BE EXPELLED FROM ANGOLA, A COURSE OF ACTION WITH WHICH HE SAID THE HIGH COMMISSIONER IS IN COMPLETE ACCORD. HE REQUESTED THE CONSULS TO ASK THEIR NATIONAL NEWSMEN TO ADOPT A MORE BALANCED OUTLOOK, RATHER THAN ADHERING TO THE PRO-MPLA LINE PUT OUT BY PORTUGUESE REPORTERS AND ANI.

4. EDUARDO DID NOT SPECULATE ABOUT THE FUTURE EXCEPT TO WARN THAT FNLA HAD ONLY USED TEN PERCENT OF ITS LUANDA STRENGTH DURING THE RECENT FIGHTING AND COULD EASILY TAKE OVER THE CITY IF MPLA PUSHED IT TOO FAR. HOWEVER, HE SAID, FNLA AND UNITA STILL WANTED ELECTIONS, ALTHOUGH HE WAS DOUBTFUL AS TO MPLA'S DESIRE TO TEST THEIR STRENGTH IN A FREE ELECTION.

5. EDUARDO'S PERFORMANCE WAS UNIMPRESSIVE. THE PRESENTATION WAS DISJOINTED AND LACKED SYSTEMATIC ORGANIZATION. HE CAME ACROSS WELL WHEN HE WAS EXPLAINING FNLA RESTRAINT FOR THE PAST MONTHS BUT HE WAS VAGUE, EVASIVE AND UNCONVINCING ON THE TOPIC OF THE ALLEGED MASSACRES. HE DID NOT OPEN THE MEETING UP TO QUESTIONS.

KILLORAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, LIBERATION FRONTS, ALLEGATIONS, ATROCITIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: WorrelSW
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LUANDA00350
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750114-0089
From: LUANDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750490/aaaaddy.tel
Line Count: 87
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: WorrelSW
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <06 NOV 2003 by WorrelSW>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FNLA REPLIES TO ATROCITY STORIES IN WORLD PRESS
TAGS: PINT, AO, FNLA, MPLA, (EDUARDO, JOHNNY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006